



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/708,673	03/18/2004	Jianbo Lu	81095825FGT1907	2672

28549 7590 02/14/2006

KEVIN G. MIERZWA
ARTZ & ARTZ, P.C.
28333 TELEGRAPH ROAD, SUITE 250
SOUTHFIELD, MI 48034

EXAMINER

BURCH, MELODY M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3683

DATE MAILED: 02/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement filed 6/14/04 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. Examiner is specifically referring to references: DE-3625025, DE-4224887, and EP-0295396. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 12/22/05 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 31, 36, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of US Patent 6842683 to Kim.

Schlichenmaier et al. disclose in col. 2 lines 28-37 a method of controlling a vehicle and a trailer comprising: determining a presence of a trailer and applying brake steer to the vehicle in response to the trailer to enhance control of the trailer relative to the vehicle.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included applying brake steer comprises applying at least one brake at a first wheel to reduce a vehicle turning radius, as taught by Kim, in order to provide a means of improving vehicle stability.

5. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and further in view of EP-0253964 (EP'964).

Schlichenmaier et al. fail to include the limitation of generating a reverse direction signal of the vehicle and applying brake steer in response to the reverse direction signal.

EP'964 teaches in the last 7 lines of the abstract the limitation of generating a reverse direction signal of the vehicle and applying brake steer in response to the reverse direction signal.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included effecting brake steer in response to a generated

reverse direction signal, as taught by EP'964, in order to provide a means of triggering the control of the vehicle-trailer combination.

6. Claims 3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and EP-0253964 (EP'964) as applied to claim 2 and further in view of US Patent 6112845 to Oyama et al.

Schlichenmaier et al., as modified, fail to include the limitation of generating the reverse direction signal from a shift lever or a transmission controller.

Oyama et al. teach in col. 4 the limitation of a reverse detecting unit 18 generating a reverse direction signal from a shift lever or a transmission controller (position of transmission gears).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the reverse direction signal of Schlichenmaier et al. to have been derived from a shift lever or a transmission controller, as taught by Oyama et al., in order to provide a functionally equivalent means of providing vehicle travel direction information.

7. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and EP-0253964 (EP'964) as applied to claim 2 and further in view of US Patent 4372407 to McColl.

Schlichenmaier et al., as modified, fail to include the limitation of generating the reverse direction signal from a push button.

McColl teaches in col. 8 lines 66-67 the limitation of a reverse direction signal being generated from a push button.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the reverse direction signal of Schlichenmaier et al. to have been derived from a push button, as taught by McColl, in order to provide a functionally equivalent means of providing vehicle travel direction information.

8. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and EP-0253964 (EP'964) as applied to claim 2 and further in view of JP-2003-191774 (using US 2005/0027402 to Koibuchi et al. as an English equivalent).

Schlichenmaier et al., as modified, fail to include the limitation of generating the reverse direction signal from a wheel speed sensor.

Koibuchi et al. teach in paragraph [0256] the limitation of a reverse direction signal being generated from a push button.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the reverse direction signal of Schlichenmaier et al. to have been derived from a wheel speed sensor, as taught by Koibuchi et al., in order to provide a functionally equivalent means of providing vehicle travel direction information.

9. Claims 9, 17, 29, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and further in view of US Patent 5709435 to Wood.

Schlichenmaier et al. are silent with regards to the limitation of applying a trailer brake and a vehicle brake.

Wood teaches in col. 5 lines 16-19 the limitation of applying a trailer brake and a vehicle brake.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included applying a trailer brake and a vehicle brake, as taught by Wood, in order to provide a means of improving vehicle stability by helping to prevent jackknifing.

10. Claims 10 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and further in view of US Patent 6804597 to Posselius et al.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of determining the presence of a trailer with a hitch sensor.

Posselius et al. teach in col. 4 lines 50-53 the limitation of a hitch sensor 22 for determining the presence of a trailer.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included a hitch sensor, as taught by Posselius et al., in order to provide a means of determining the presence and more specifically the orientation and location of a trailer.

11. Claims 11, 12, 33, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and further in view of US Patent 5455557 to Noll et al.

Art Unit: 3683

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of determining the presence of a trailer with a reverse aid or ultrasonic sensor.

Noll et al. teach in col. 4 lines 2-6 the limitation of an ultrasonic sensor (Applicant notes that the reverse aid sensor is an ultrasonic sensor) for determining the presence of a trailer.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included an ultrasonic or reverse aid sensor, as taught by Noll et al., in order to provide a means of determining the presence and more specifically the orientation and location of a trailer.

12. Claims 13, 15, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and further in view of JP-2002-12172 (JP'172).

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of determining the presence of a trailer with a camera or a manually activated mechanism.

JP'172 teaches in lines 3-4 from the bottom of the solution section the limitation of a camera for determining the presence of a trailer.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included a camera or manually activated mechanism, as taught by JP'172, in order to provide a means of determining the presence and more specifically the orientation of a trailer.

Art Unit: 3683

13. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and further in view of US Patent 6804597 to Traechtler.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of determining the presence of a trailer with a harness current.

Traechtler teaches in col. 8 lines 3-4 the limitation of using harness current for determining the presence of a trailer.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included the use of harness current, as taught by Traechtler, in order to provide a means of determining the presence of a trailer.

14. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and US Patent 5709435 to Wood as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of EP-0253964 (EP'964).

See the rejection of claim 2.

15. Claims 19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and Wood and EP-0253964 (EP'964), as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of Oyama et al.

See the rejection of claims 3 and 5.

16. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and Wood and EP-0253964 (EP'964), as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of McColl.

Art Unit: 3683

See the rejection of claim 4.

17. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and Wood and EP-0253964 (EP'964), as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of Koibuchi et al.

See the rejection of claim 6.

18. Claims 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and Wood as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Posselius et al.

See the rejection of claim 10.

19. Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and Wood as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Noll et al.

See the rejection of claims 11 and 12.

20. Claims 26 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view Kim and Wood as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of JP-2002-12172 (JP'172).

See the rejection of claims 13 and 15.

21. Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim and Wood as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Traechtler.

See the rejection of claim 14.

Art Unit: 3683

22. Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim as applied to claim 31 above and further in view of Urvoy.

Schlichenmaier et al. fail to include the limitation of applying brake steer comprises applying an increased drive torque to a second wheel relative to a first wheel.

Urvoy teaches in col. 1 lines 19-23 the limitation of applying brake steer comprises applying an increased drive torque to a second wheel relative to a first wheel.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of controlling the vehicle of Schlichenmaier et al. to have included applying an increased drive torque to a second wheel relative to a first wheel, as taught by Urvoy, in order to provide a means of improving vehicle stability.

23. Claims 39 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim as applied to claim 31 above and further in view of US Patent 5747683 to Gerum et al.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of a response to the reverse signal direction signal and the steering wheel angle signal and yaw rate signal.

Gerum et al. teach in figure 1 the use of a control mechanism including reverse directional signal (from wheel speeds) and steering wheel angle signal inputs as shown.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the inputs into the controller of Schlichenmaier et al., to have included control based on a reverse directional signal and steering wheel

angle signal, as taught by Gerum et al., in order to provide a means of achieving increased vehicle stability based on particular vehicle dynamic characteristics.

24. Claim 41 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim as applied to claim 31 above and further in view of US Patent 6017101 to Matsuda.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of a response to the reverse signal direction signal and the steering torque signal.

Matsuda teaches in the figure on the front of the patent the use of a control mechanism including reverse directional signal (from wheel speeds) and steering torque signal inputs as shown.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the inputs into the controller of Schlichenmaier et al., to have included control based on a reverse directional signal and steering torque signal, as taught by Matsuda, in order to provide a means of achieving increased vehicle stability based on particular vehicle dynamic characteristics.

25. Claim 42 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim as applied to claim 31 above and further in view of US Patent 5747683 to Gerum et al. and US Patent 5480221 to Morita et al.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of a steering wheel angle signal, a vehicle velocity signal, and a reverse direction signal.

Gerum et al. teach in figure 1 the use of a control mechanism including reverse directional signal (from wheel speeds) and steering wheel angle signal inputs as shown.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the inputs into the controller of Schlichenmaier et al., to have included control based on a reverse directional signal and steering wheel angle signal, as taught by Gerum et al., in order to provide a means of achieving increased vehicle stability based on particular vehicle dynamic characteristics.

Morita et al. show in the figure on the front of the patent a vehicle velocity sensor 73 as an input into a braking controller 71.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the inputs into the controller of Schlichenmaier et al., to have included control based on a vehicle velocity sensor and signal, as taught by Morita et al., in order to provide a means of achieving increased vehicle stability based on particular vehicle dynamic characteristics.

26. Claim 43 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlichenmaier et al. in view of Kim as applied to claim 31 above and further in view of US Patent 5005130 to Breen et al.

Schlichenmaier et al. lack the limitation of a means to determine trailer position.

Breen et al. disclose in col. 9 lines 25-27 the limitation of using trailer position as a control parameter.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the inputs into the controller of Schlichenmaier et al., to have included control based on a reverse directional signal and steering wheel

angle signal, as taught by Breen et al., in order to provide a means of achieving increased vehicle stability based on particular vehicle dynamic characteristics.

Response to Arguments

27. Applicant's arguments filed 12/22/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The inclusion of the limitation of "the presence of the" trailer does not overcome the current rejection. Applicant admits that there is a trailer detection unit, but argues that Schlichenmaier fails to teach or suggest applying brake-steer to the vehicle in response to the presence of the trailer. Examiner notes that Schlichenmaier effects yaw control via brake pressure differences in response to the presence of a trailer as disclosed in col. 2 lines 28-37 and, therefore, effects brake-steer in response to the presence of a trailer. Schlichenmaier fails to recite that the brake steer is applied by specifically applying at least one brake at a first vehicle wheel to reduce a vehicle turning radius of the vehicle and trailer. Kim is used for the specifically recited brake steer application method. Applicant argues that Kim does not teach reducing the turning radius of the vehicle and trailer. Examiner notes Schlichenmaier discloses applying brake steer to a vehicle-trailer combination and that incorporating the specific brake steer method of Kim to the vehicle of Schlichenmaier would automatically affect the movement or turning of the trailer which follows the vehicle. Examiner also notes that the claim recites "to reduce the VEHICLE turning radius of the vehicle and trailer". Accordingly, the rejections have been maintained.

Conclusion

28. This is a continuation of applicant's earlier Application No. 10/708673. All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the earlier application and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the earlier application. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action in this case. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no, however, event will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Melody M. Burch whose telephone number is 571-272-7114. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (6:30 AM-3:00 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James McClellan can be reached on 571-272-6786. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3683

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

mmb
February 8, 2006

Melody M. Burch
Melody M. Burch
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3683

2/8/06